



## Press Release

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Contact: Jim Hightower (404) 331-0100, ext. 215

### **SBA Guaranteed 7(a) Loan Helps Winton Machine Company Bounce Back from the National Economic Downturn**

*—Company's \$250,000 Loan was made by Cornerstone Bank—*

George and Lisa Winton started Winton Machine Company 13 years ago to make machines that bend metal tubing now used in a host of products from fuel lines for Harley Davidson motorcycles to hydraulic systems in U.S. Army helicopters.

Like many small businesses, the Wintons have seen both good times and other times that have not been all that good. During the good times, employment grew to about 20 employees. But when its business started to hit the skids in 2004, Winton Machine had to scale back to less than 10 workers.



With a lot less cash flow, the company turned to an SBA backed loan of \$250,000 in 2003 for new equipment and working capital for additional employees. Since a lot of banks don't understand manufacturing, finding one that would loan them money wasn't that easy, explained Lisa Winton, Chief Financial Officer. "Fortunately we found a loan specialist, Doug Hood, who matched us with Cornerstone Bank and they funded our loan," she added. "The loan helped sustain us. It got us through some tough times while we added new equipment that increased our business."

With signs of improvement in the economy, Winton Machine recently added a new engineering employee to its design department, bringing current employment to 12 workers. The company makes a large line of standard tube fabricating equipment but has moved in recent years into more engineered customized machines that bend tubes used in all kinds of products. Winton Machine's 10,000 square foot plant is located in Suwanee, Georgia.

In recent years, the company has started to make machines for export, both for distributors and direct customers in countries like Mexico, Canada, Israel, South Korea and Sweden. Last year exports only accounted for about two percent of sales, but Ms. Winton said they plan to increase this market with the help of Georgia's overseas trade offices and an improved company web site to gain foreign customers by way of the internet. Industries that use its equipment include aerospace, refrigeration-heating, cooking, automobiles and after-market auto parts.

In addition to their SBA guaranteed loan, the Wintons credit other success in part to counseling they have received over the years from Darrel Hulsey and other staff at the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

Ms. Winton said Hulsey helped them with various small business issues when they first started their company, and they later took the SBDC course on How to Start a Small Business. In addition, her husband, who is company president, recently took the “FastTrac” management course offered by the SBDC for small business owners.

George Winton is from Columbia, N.J., and a graduate of Rutgers University. Lisa Winton is a native of New City, N.Y., and graduated from North Miami High School after moving to south Florida as a teenager. She is a graduate of the University of Florida. Ms. Winton is the incoming president of the Junior League of Gwinnett and North Fulton County. Part of the league’s mission is to help train women for leadership positions.

**Lisa & George Winton, Owners**

**Winton Machine Company**

**3644 Burnette Road**

**Suwanee, GA 30024**

**770/831-1917**

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